

No. 2.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

" His eye was meek and gentle ; and a smile
Play'd on his lips ; and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity and love,
The occupation dearest to his heart
Was to encourage goodness."

Cowper.

VOL. I.

FEBRUARY, 1823.

No. 2.

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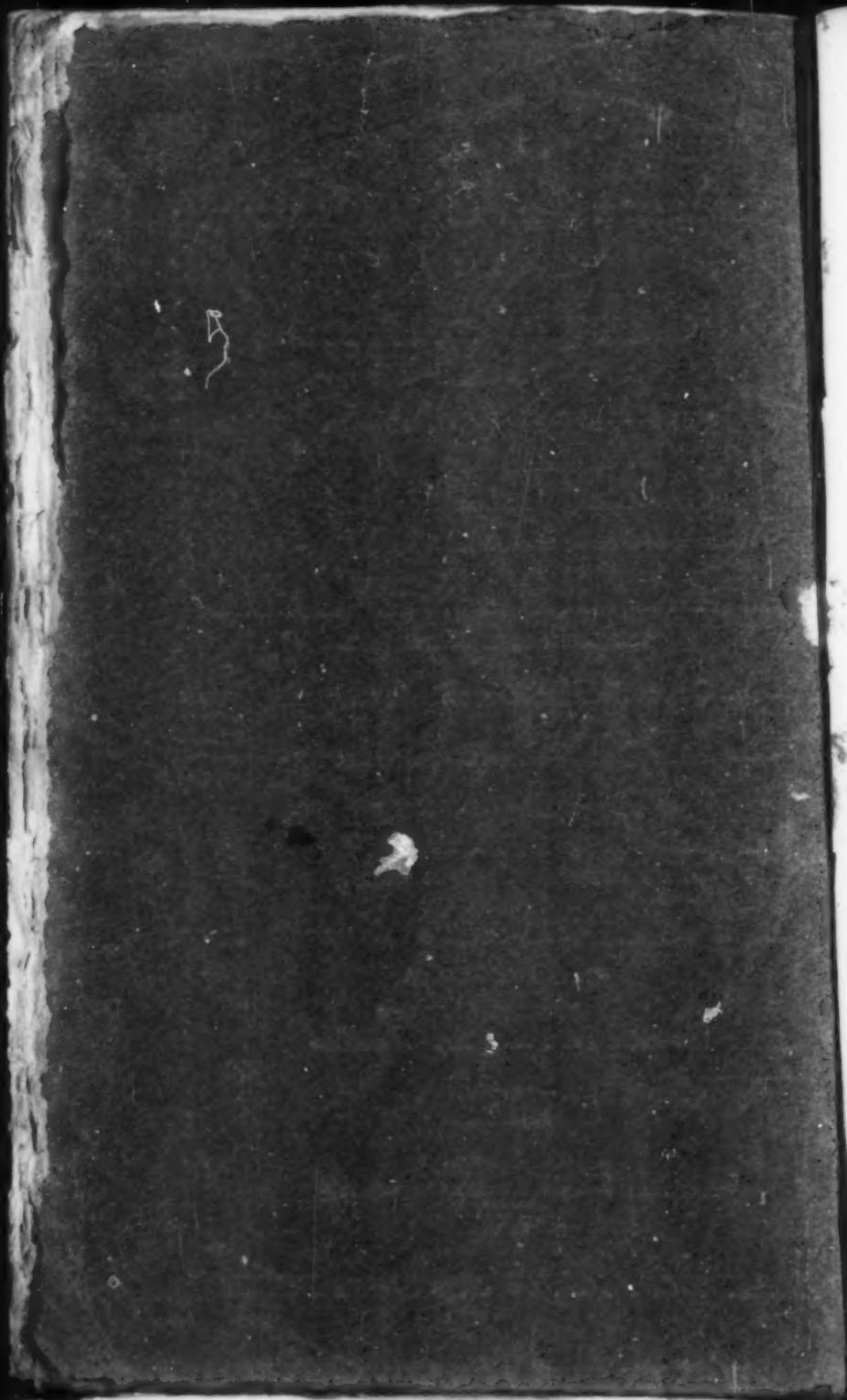
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THE

CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

No pleasure?—Are domestic comforts dead?
Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled?
Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame,
Good sense, good health, good conscience and good fame?
All these belong to virtue and all prove
That virtue has a title to your love.

Couper.

VOL. I. FEBRUARY, 1823. No. 2

Christian motives for discretion in temporal affairs.

Real piety will influence the spirit and conduct of a person in respect to all his concerns, whether spiritual or temporal. It cannot be supposed, that a person, who fears the Lord, will guide his affairs, as if he had no fear of God before his eyes. His duty to his Creator, his fellow creatures and himself will induce him to guide his affairs with discretion. There are many and important reasons to induce a pious person discretely to manage his temporal concerns.

1. That a pious person may enjoy proper leisure from his worldly concerns, he will guide his affairs with discretion. If a person do not discretely manage his temporal concerns, he will be always entangled and perplexed by the

labors and cares of this life. In such a state he can bestow no proper attention upon his spiritual and eternal interests. But if a person's temporal affairs be discretely managed, they will not interfere with any of the duties or enjoyments of religion. When the devotions of the closet, of the family, or of the Lord's day demand the attention of a christian, his secular affairs should be so managed, as to make no intrusion upon these solemn and pleasant duties. The christian needs to be frequently released from worldly labors and cares, that he may visit the afflicted and needy members of Christ's family and discharge the other duties which he owes to the household of faith. If a person be careful and troubled about the many things of this life, he has no leisure for reading the scriptures, or other books of religious instruction.—The only way, in which a christian can proceed steadily and easily in the performance of religious duties, is to keep the affairs of this world in their proper place and in good order. Such leisure, as a christian needs for religious purposes, cannot be enjoyed, unless his worldly interests be discretely managed.

2. A person cannot expect to be successful in his temporal concerns without discretion. It is highly important and desirable, that a person should be successful in his secular interests and labors. But if he does not exercise discretion in respect to these affairs, he can have no reason to expect success. It is true, that success cannot always be secured by human management, however judicious. Yet discretion is a christ-

ian's duty and is the best security for success in his secular employments. Indiscretion always produces embarrassment and poverty.—If a pious person has been discreet, though unsuccessful, he cannot blame himself, nor be justly blamed by other persons. In his affliction and poverty he will be assisted by his brethren, be supported by his Savior and be comforted by the Holy Spirit. But, generally, want of success in secular interests and pursuits, arises from indiscretion. To avoid such an evil a pious person will be attentive and careful to guide his affairs with discretion.

3. Pious persons will discretely manage their temporal concerns, that they may not dishonor their religious profession. Christians should have a constant regard to the character which they profess. They profess to have a high and holy character. That they may maintain such a character in the view of their christian brethren and before the world, they must discretely manage their temporal concerns. If they act without wisdom and discretion in respect to these things, they will render their profession liable to suspicions and bring their holy religion into contempt. Nor can a person without discretion be just, faithful and honest in his secular dealings. But christians are commanded and exhorted by the apostle, to "provide things honest in the sight of all men." It is commonly by misconduct in respect to their temporal affairs that religious professors do first injure and dishonor their profession. To avoid such evils a good man will guide his affairs with discretion.

4. Pious persons will discretely manage their temporal interests, that they may have property to bestow for charitable purposes. This duty is frequently urged upon christians in the scriptures. Solomon says—"Give a portion to seven and also to eight." And the Savior says, "do good and lend, hoping for nothing again."—The apostle says, "I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak and to remember the words of Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And to excite christians to be liberal in giving their property for charitable purposes, he says—"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich."—Respecting the professor of christianity he also says, "let him labor, working with his hands the thing, which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." A liberal spirit and conduct in giving worldly property for charitable purposes is a leading and essential trait in the character of a pious person. But they, who do not discretely manage their temporal concerns, cannot maintain such a character, nor perform this important duty. Yet they, who are discrete, can almost always have something to give to him that needeth. And every person, who regards the example and instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ, will constantly exercise discretion in his temporal affairs, that he may have property to bestow for charitable purposes.

5. Without discretion in his secular concerns a person cannot be prepared to answer for his conduct in this respect at the final judgment.—For all our conduct in this life we shall, in the day of judgment, be called to an account.—What respects our temporal interests, pursuits, and labors will then be found to be a very important part of our conduct. They, who conduct discretely and wisely in respect to these concerns, will be approved and rewarded by the supreme and final judge. But they, who act without discretion, will be condemned and punished for their conduct in the great day of final judgment and eternal retribution. If a person does not regard and obey the word of God in the management of his temporal concerns he must be ashamed and confounded, when he is called to answer for his conduct. But truly pious persons will desire and labor to guide their affairs with discretion, that when they are called to account, they may receive and enjoy divine favor. To every person, who so conducts, his Lord will say—"Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Wordly property is a valuable talent. With this talent as well as with every other talent, all persons are bound to serve and honor God. For all persons must render an account to God for all their conduct in respect to their temporal interests and pursuits. In view of this account every pious person will be very watchful and careful to guide his affairs with discretion.

'The instructions of the Old Testament
useful to Christians.....No. 1.

Our Savior made great use of the Scriptures. Sometimes he quoted them; sometimes he expounded them; and once he appealed to them as a proof of his divine character and mission. He said, "Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life. And they are they, which testify of me." The apostles followed the example of their Lord and Master and made the scriptures the theme of their publick discourses. It is written, "Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures; opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead." To the saints at Corinth he says, "For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he arose again the third day, according to the scriptures." And he wrote his epistle to the Hebrews, on purpose to explain the scriptures. Now the scriptures, which Christ and the apostles quoted and explained, were the writings of Moses and the prophets; or what we call the Old Testament, in distinction from the New. For the New Testament was not written in the time of Christ; nor but a part of it in the time of the apostles. For this reason the apostle speaks of the Scriptures as written aforetime. He says—"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were

written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. The apostle in these words represents the Old Testament as containing peculiar instruction. He says—" Whatever things were written aforetime were written *for our learning.*" This intimates, that there are things to be learnt from the Old Testament, which cannot be found in any other writings. And this will fully appear, if we consider the following particulars.

1. The Old Testament gives us an account of the creation of the world. We may search all antiquity, and every book now in the world; and we can find no true, authentic, rational account of the creation, except in the Old Testament. There is no nation on the earth, who have been destitute of this book, that can give any authentic or consistent account of the existence of the world. The old heathen philosophers generally supposed the world was eternal; and wracked their inventions to prove, that it was impossible, that it should have had a beginning. Though some of them acknowledged the existence of a Supreme and eternal Being, yet they denied that he could create something out of nothing. Hence they concluded, that either the world was eternal; or else was the Deity himself. They could find no history to assist them in their inquiries upon this subject. And there is no history now to be found so old as the Old Testament; or that pretends to give an account of the origin of the world. The whole world is indebted to the

Old Testament, for all they know about the great event of creation. The first verse of the first chapter of Genesis gives us more real information concerning the origin of the world, than any other book, or all other books that ever were published. Hence says the apostle, "Through faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Had it not been for the account given us in the Old Testament, we could never have known when, nor in what manner, nor in what order the material creation was produced. All tradition of this great event is so corrupted and lost, that we should be at this day, wholly in the dark about the beginning of the heavens and the earth, and all the inferior animals, did we not enjoy the book of the Old Testament. This gives us as clear, distinct, and rational an account of the creation, as we are capable of receiving; and sufficient to satisfy our minds upon this subject.

2. The Old Testament gives us an account of the creation of man. The human race have existed so long, that they have lost the knowledge of the stock from which they descended. It has been for ages a matter of dispute among mankind, whether they did all originate from one blood; or whether different nations did not at different times, originate from different stocks. And though no satisfactory accounts have ever been given of different races of men; yet no nation, without divine revelation, have been able to trace the first progenitor of the human spe-

cies. Hence various nations have run into such various and extravagant notions of their own origin and antiquity. The Chinese, the Egyptians, and many other nations, pretend that they have existed as distinct from other nations, much longer than the world has been created. They have followed their own fancies, and mere fables in forming their opinions of the origin of men; and these fallacious guides have led them into darkness and confusion respecting the beginning of the human kind. It is needless to relate the fabulous accounts, which have been given of the origin of man; some are extremely absurd; and others are by no means satisfactory. But when we look into the Old Testament, we find an account, clear and satisfactory. After God had created the material and animal world, we are told, he said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Thus, "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Here is a clear, particular, and very instructive account of the creation of man, and of his natural and moral excellence, in his primitive state. Such another account cannot be found either in books or traditions. At present mankind appear to be very different creatures. They have lost the image of their maker, and become extremely corrupt and degenerate. But the O'd Testament informs us, it was not so from the beginning. Man was once a most amiable, noble, exalted being, and but little lower than the angels. He held the second rank among the creatures of God. This leads me to observe,

3. That the Old Testament gives us an account of the fall of man. Numerous have been the conjectures of unenlightened nations upon this subject. No question has been more famous in the world, than this, "whence came evil?" Mankind have felt and deplored the miseries of the fall. All nations, who have thought or written upon the subject, have agreed, that there are sad marks of degeneracy among mankind. And they have generally concluded, that whenever, and however the human race came into existence, they must have been better in their origin, than in their increase. The most learned and judicious heathens have conjectured, that human nature, some time or other, has received a great and general shock. But when, or where, or how, they have never been able to discover. Upon this dark and dismal case, the Old Testament throws a blaze of light. It informs us, that mankind were better

in their primitive state, than they are at present; and that their present deplorable condition is owing to a very memorable, and in itself considered, a very lamentable event. It gives us this short but full account of the first apostacy of the human race. " And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made; and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die. For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise: she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." This tremendous act of disobedience, brought sin, and death, and all our woe with it.

"For by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." When we look into the Old testament, and read this affecting account of the defection of our first parents, we can account for briars, and thorns, and thistles; for pains, sickness, misfortunes and death. Yea, we can see the propriety of all the natural evils, which have wrung the hearts of men, in every age of the world, and which have so often filled our own minds with anguish and keen distress.

4. The old testament gives an account of the first intimation of God's gracious design of saving our fallen race, through a suffering Redeemer. The design was formed before the foundation of the world; but it was not revealed, till after our first parents had fallen from their rectitude, and exposed themselves to endless ruin. Then, not a gleam of light or hope appeared. When they had given up themselves for lost;—when they dreaded the presence and hated the character of their injured Sovereign; then did the God of all grace, reveal his purposes of mercy, and say unto fallen, perishing, hopeless creatures, I have found a ransom for you. "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord, amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he

said, who told thee that thou wast naked? hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy *head*, and thou shalt bruise his heel." From this little fountain have issued the waters of life, which have since flowed in ten thousand streams to mankind. In this first promise of an incarnate Saviour, was comprised the great scheme of redemption. From the moment, that this promise was made, the work of redemption was begun, which has been carrying on ever since, to this day, and will be carried on to the end of time. And if we inquire from one end of the earth to the other; or search the records of all nations, we can find no account of the beginning of the gospel, but only in the book of Genesis.

To be continued.

'The welfare of the rising generation.

That our sons may be as plants, grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace. The psalm, from which these words are chosen, was written by David, after he had received the kingdom of Israel. As he was a man of ardent piety and enlarged benevolence, he greatly desired to promote the real excellence and prosperity of his kingdom. On this account his heart was turned towards the rising generation and was greatly concerned for their welfare.— His concern for their welfare he expressed in the words above. In these words he prays that their sons might be as plants, grown up in their youth; and that their daughters might be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace. In the word of God men are often compared to trees and children are compared to plants. Wise and pious men are compared to verdant and fruitful trees, which are very pleasant and useful. When the psalmist prays that their sons might be as plants, grown up in their youth; he expresses a desire for whatever might be excellent and amiable in their character and useful and happy in their condition.— While he prays that their sons might be as verdant and thrifty plants, he also prays that their daughters might be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace. Polished cornerstones, while they connect the parts of an edifice, are beautiful ornaments in architecture. Females resemble cornerstones, as they become

by marriage, the bond of union between their own families and the families of their husbands. And if they possess an excellent character, while they connect, they do also adorn the different families to which they belong. On this account excellent and amiable daughters are compared to polished cornerstones, which connect and beautify the parts of a magnificent edifice. It appears, then, that the comparisons, which the psalmist here employs, are happily chosen and highly instructive. They serve to express his concern for the real welfare of the rising generation among the people of his kingdom. And in respect to the same object every pious person must agree in his views and feelings with the psalmist. It is then evident that pious persons are greatly concerned for the welfare of the rising generation. Let us, then consider what is necessary to their welfare.—Many parents desire for their children; and most children desire for themselves such things, as are needless, or even hurtful. But the things, which will now be mentioned, are highly important, if not absolutely necessary to the temporal and spiritual welfare of the rising generation.

Health of body is necessary to their welfare.

Health is necessary to the proper cultivation and improvement of the mental faculties, as well as to the performance of the common labors and duties of life. Without this blessing no person can be highly useful or happy, whatever may be his talents or privileges in other respects. The health of the rising generation will probably be affected, in an high degree, dur-

ing their whole lives, by the treatment they receive in their early years. Whatever is done to human beings during the tender days of infancy, childhood and youth, has a great and lasting effect upon their welfare. The health and strength, firmness and vigour of their bodies demand the early and constant attention of all persons, who are concerned for the promotion of knowledge, virtue, usefulness and happiness in the rising generation. Too commonly there is little done to prevent bodily disease and weakness in young persons, until these evils are felt; and so fixed, that they cannot, easily, be removed. For want of health, many persons, who were blessed with promising talents and favorable circumstances in other respects, have been useless and unhappy all their days. If their parents and other persons, who have the interests of the rising generation in their hands, would truly promote their welfare, they must make the health of their bodies an object of early and constant attention and concern.

Domestic subordination necessary to their welfare.

Good order and proper government in families are among the most powerful means of promoting the real interests of young persons.—When these means are rightly used, children find more pleasure in submission and obedience than they can ever find in the indulgence of a froward and stubborn temper. If children are not taught and used in the family to know and to keep their proper place and to treat their parents and all the members of the house with respect and decency, they will be impatient and

unhappy under the restraints and commands of their literary instructors. Nor will they be less impatient and unhappy, as they advance in years, under the restraints and requirements of civil order and religious obligation. And through life they will be unfitted to perform the duties and bear the burdens, which arise from the relations and concerns of civil and religious society. Without the benefits of domestic government and subordination, the rising generation will carry through life a stubborn, uneasy and impatient spirit, which will be a constant source of trouble to themselves, as well as to their connections. Early impressions and habits produce durable and important consequences. And nothing, which is merely external, is better fitted to promote the excellence, usefulness and happiness of human beings, than an early acquaintance with the submission and obedience, which are enjoined upon young persons in such families, as are properly instructed and governed. An habitual compliance with domestic sub rdination will prepare children and youth to see, to take and keep their proper places in future life with ease and honor to themselves and with benefit to the community. Domestic government and subordination are highly conducive and even necessary to the welfare of the rising generation.

The general prevalence of the gospel.

TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE ON THIS SUBJECT.

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. Ps. xxii. 27. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Ps. lxxii. 8.—And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. Isa. ii. 2.—For the nation and kingdom, that will not serve thee, shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. Isa. ix. 12.—And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Dan. vii. 27.—For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Habak. ii. 14.—And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying—the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever. Rev. xi. 15.

QUESTIONS.

1. Have these divine declarations yet been fulfilled?—2. What has been in past ages the state of the world in respect to religion?—3. Has the true religion, in some degree, exist-

ed on the earth, ever since the world began?—4. Do the scriptures perfectly teach that religion, which is to prevail among all nations?—5. In what does the religion, which is so to prevail, essentially consist?—6. Is there any reason to hope, from the natural character of mankind, that the true gospel ever will prevail among all nations?—7. Will means alone, independently of divine influence, ever accomplish this great object?—8. What is the nature of that divine influence, which is necessary to its accomplishment?—9. If God, by his holy and gracious influence, cause all nations to become truly pious, will not mankind be turned into machines, and be deprived of free moral agency?—10. If God has promised, and is determined to spread the gospel in its power among all nations, is it proper to do any thing in respect to this object? or even to pray for it?—11. If God intends to accomplish such a great, wise, and good object, then are not any means that may be used for its accomplishment, perfectly lawful, however unlawful they may be in themselves? or is it still true that we must not do evil, that good may come?—12. Is there any thing unusual, at the present day, in respect to the prevalence of the gospel among the nations?—13. What institutions are formed for this purpose? and what means are now used to effect it?—14. Will the general prevalence of the gospel produce an exceedingly wonderful alteration in the world?—15. How will the prevalence of the gospel affect the civil governments, which now exist?—16. How will it prob-

ably affect the different denominations of christian professors?—17. What are the opinions, and what, in their own view, are the prospects of those persons, who are now the most zealously engaged in the promotion of what they account the gospel?—18. Are human opinions and prospects, in respect to the great designs and the future events of divine providence, commonly very scriptural, rational, and certain?—19. What will precede the general prevalence of the gospel according to the revealed purposes and declarations of God?—20. Which will stand in regard to this great and awful subject, the opinions and notions of men; or the purposes and declarations of God?—21. Which ought to stand, the purpose of God, or the plans of men?

True christians mean to live as Christ lived.

True christians are in reality, as well as by profession, the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is their leader and commander; and they are bound, by the strongest and tenderest obligations, to follow and obey him. The spirit and conduct of Christ exhibit a proper and perfect example for their constant attention and imitation. And they really mean to live, as he lived, for a number of important reasons.

1. True christians love Christ. It is natural to all mankind to imitate those whom they love, even without designing it; and it is as natural

to design it. For whatever appears amiable in others, we always wish to possess, and appear to possess. Christ appears altogether lovely in the eyes of all his true followers. When they look into his life, they see it to be absolutely perfect. There is nothing he said, or did, or suffered, but what appears amiable on his part. He lived in this world, and treated this world, and all things in it, in the most amiable and perfect manner. His conduct, therefore, commands the love and approbation of all who possess his spirit; and this makes them ardently desire to live as he lived. In whatever degree they really love Christ, in the same degree they desire to feel, and live, and act as he did.

2. They mean to live as Christ lived, because they know this will be to the honour of Christ. The more they love Christ, the more they wish to honour him in the eyes of the world. And since his life was truly amiable, they wish to imitate it, and in that way exhibit it to the view of all around them. This is the reason given by the apostle. "For we which live are always delivered unto death for *Jesus' sake*, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." Christ lives in the lives of all true christians, so far as they follow his steps. And the apostle says, that he and the primitive christians were delivered unto death; that is, exposed to the same evils that Christ was, that they might have opportunity to live and act in a similar manner that Christ did, in similar circumstances. So that the life of Christ might be copied and seen in their lives. They meant,

therefore, to keep Christ in their eye, and manifest his life in their own. And this is what all true christians mean to do at this day. They resolve, in their most serious and solemn moments, to aim, at all times, and in all places, to exhibit the life of Christ, which they know will always redound to his honour. Christ told his followers, that he would have them make all men know that they were his disciples. And it was by living and acting like Christ, that they did, in their day, make it appear, that they had been with Jesus, and were his true disciples. And in the same way, all Christians mean to make manifest the life of Christ, by living as he did. And so far as they do in reality live like Christ, they do make all men know that they are his disciples.

3. They mean to live as Christ did, because they know it will be for the honour of religion. They have named the name of Christ, and professed his religion, by which they have given the world a right to expect, that they should live the same religious and holy life, that Christ did. His life is recorded, and they know how he lived, and can compare the lives of christians with his. And for this reason the honour of christianity is inseparably connected with the lives of christians. If they live as Christ did, all the world will say that their religion is beautiful and important. Hence there is no other way in which christians can honour religion so much, as living the religion of Christ, or expressing his spirit in all their conduct. And this makes them really desirous of following his steps.

4. Another reason why they mean to manifest the life of Christ in their own is, because they know that his life was divinely recorded for this very purpose. The apostle Peter tells christians, that they ought to be willing to suffer. He says, "for hereunto were ye called, because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." Christ designed his life should be an example to all his followers, not only while he was in the world, but after he left it. And accordingly he sent his Spirit to inspire the Evangelists to record it for the instruction, guide, consolation, and imitation of all true christians to the end of time. They feel the force of his example not only as perfect, but as clothed with divine authority. It does not lie at their discretion whether they shall follow it or not; but they are bound by the authority of Christ to live as he lived, and follow his steps. And they know, that they cannot be his friends, unless they do whatsoever he commands them.—To all these reasons we may add,

5. That all true christians are fully convinced, that they shall always act right, so far as they follow Christ, and act as he did in similar circumstances. They know his example was perfect, and a perfect conformity to it is always duty. They, therefore, as much mean to live as Christ did, as they mean to do their duty. They, accordingly mean to keep Christ in view as their guide and leader. And when they are in doubt about duty, they ask themselves, how would Christ feel and conduct in our situation.

And when they have determined this, they have discovered their duty, whether they are willing to do it or not. But so far as they have the spirit of Christ, they are ready to follow him whithersoever he leads, either by precept or example. For they mean to manifest the life of Christ in their mortal flesh; or to live as he lived, as long as they live.

On Reading.

No persons will obtain the important purposes of reading, unless they read in a proper manner. We begin to read in early life, before we pursue or desire its advantages. And doubtless many persons form an habit of reading in such a manner, as is productive of little benefit.—Many persons read the scriptures of divine truth very constantly and yet appear to acquire but few ideas, or to retain any permanent and useful impressions. And if persons read either the holy scriptures, or other books in an improper manner they will not accomplish the important purposes, for which they should read. How, then ought persons to employ themselves in reading? To this question it may be answered—That *they should read with attention*. No books of any value were ever composed without thorough and intense application. Good and useful books are not written without much study and labor. Hence the wise man says, “much study is a weariness of the flesh.” If attention, labor and study are necessary to compose valua-

ble books, such books cannot be read to any profit without fixed and engaged attention. Stupidity, carelessness and indolence of the mind are inconsistent with profitable reading.—To read to advantage, it is necessary to perceive and understand the general subject and object of the author; the arrangement and connection of his ideas, statements, sentiments and arguments; and to examine carefully and thoroughly the whole contents of his work. While a person is engaged in reading, so as to understand what he reads, he should also be attentive and careful to make, in respect to himself, a faithful and judicious application and improvement of what he reads. The proper reading of books, then, requires attention and study, and cannot be performed without the exertion and exercise of the mental faculties. To read without such a degree of attention, as fixes and employs the mind, is real idleness. Some books, in order to be read to advantage, require a greater degree of thought and study than other books. But no book is worthy to be read, that is unworthy of the fixed attention of the reader. It is vain and absurd for any persons to suppose, that they shall be profited by spending much time in reading, or by reading many books, if they do not read with such a degree of attention, as is necessary to obtain the proper objects, for which they should read. Whenever a person takes a book into his hand to read, he should resolve and determine to bestow so much attention and study upon it, as shall make it useful to himself. Why should a person read, if

he does not mean to gain something by it ? But how can a person gain any thing by reading the best books, if they are read without attention? The proper and useful reading of books, then, requires a fixed and engaged attention.

The journey of Life.

I consider every man before marriage, as climbing the hill of life. Every step presents him with some new prospect, and flatters him with the hopes of more complete enjoyment. I am now arrived at the summit of the hill ; and, I believe, in possession of all the felicity, which this world can afford. At the same time I have a clear and distinct view down the whole vale of mortality, and I perceive, that there is nothing very exquisite to be expected from it : but, by making the best of every incident, whether fortunate or otherwise, I think a wise man may make the journey tolerably easy through this life ; and must wait with patience for more perfect happiness in the next.

R. GRAVES.

The Traveller.

If we live in any known sin, or allow ourselves in the customary omission of any known duty, supposing it possible, in such a case, to preserve a sense of our acceptance, which can hardly be supposed ; for if the spirit be grieved, our evidences decline of course ; yet we could not be easy. If a traveller was absolutely sure of reaching his journey's end in safety ; yet if he walked with a thorn in his foot, he must take every step with pain. Such a thorn will be felt in the conscience, till we are favoured with a simplicity of heart and made willing in all things, great or small, to yield obedience to the authority of the Lord's precepts and make them the standing rule of our conduct,

without wilfully admitting a single exception. At the best, we shall be conscious of innumerable short-comings and shameful defilement ; but these things will not break our peace, if our hearts are upright. But if we trifle with light and connive at what we know to be wrong, we shall be weak, restless and uncomfortable.

J. NEWTON.

'The believer's duty.

What is your duty, believer, who not only hear, but know this joyful sound ? Your duty is, not only to rejoice, in this matchless harmonious conjunction of divine attributes in Christ ; but to exemplify the same, by an harmonious conjunction of graces and holy virtues in you. Let mercy and truth meeting together, as divine attributes, in Christ, be exemplified by mercy and truth meeting together, as divine virtues in you. Let righteousness and peace, kissing each other in him, be exemplified by righteousness and peace kissing each other in you. Let the meeting of mercy and truth engage you to be merciful and true ; merciful, because your heavenly father is merciful : and true, because he desires truth in the inward parts. Let the embraces of righteousness and peace, engage you to be righteous and peaceable ; that is, to be students of purity and peace. For the wisdom that is from above, is first pure and then peaceable.

R. ERSKINE.

Wisdom gained by folly.

When I had studied philosophy three years, being tickled with it, and somewhat puffed up with what progress I had made and designed and expected to make—though I must own that still as knowledge increased, self-conceit decreased ; and I apprehended I knew more the first year than ever I thought I knew afterwards—being thus prepared, I designed to go abroad and improve myself

further ; to which also I was advised. But two things broke this project ; my mother would not consent and the former exercise having brought me into bondage through fear of death, I was afraid to run the hazards I must run of my life, so long as I was in so unsettled a case as to my soul's state. Wherefore, upon the motion of some friends I consented rather to engage chaplain to a family for some time. I had not long been here, when I was often necessarily ; and frequently without sufficient necessity, engaged in debates about the truth of religion, the divinity of the scriptures and the most important doctrines delivered in them ; whereby I was drawn to read the writings of deists and other enemies to religion, that I might be acquainted with the arguments, whereby these I had occasion to dispute with, opposed the truth. As to the issue of those arguings, with respect to others, I shall here wave it, because others are concerned in it ; only I may say, I found it true, that *foolish questions and genealogies and contentions and strivings about words, are unprofitable and vain*. For *evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*. And *profane and vain bablings do increase unto more ungodliness*. And to my sad experience I found, that *their word doth eat as doth a canker, or gangrene*. It is of an infectious and contagious nature ; and therefore it is safest to shun, avoid them and follow the wise man's advice, to *forsake the foolish and live and depart from a foolish man, when we perceive not in him the lips of knowledge; and cease from the instruction, that causes to err from the words of knowledge*

T. HALYBURTON.

Reflections on the First Psalm.

1. How cautious should all, especially young people, be of keeping bad company ; for it leads them to sin ; leads them on in it by quick steps ; first to forget God, then openly to violate his law, and then to make a jest of religion, which is the last stage of wickedness, the seat of the scorner being on the very brink of hell. Have no acquaintance or correspondence with wicked men. Hear

the tender advice of the wise man, *my son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Enter not into the path of the wicked; come not near it, turn from it and flee away.*

2. We should labour to secure this blessedness, (ascribed to the pious man) for ourselves. Let us love the scriptures, study them carefully and form our lives according to them. For this is the surest way to prosperity in both worlds.

3. Let us all consider the judgment day, as an engagement to avoid that which is evil and pursue that which is good. Remember *there is a judgment to come*; a day when every man's character and conduct will be examined and their eternal state be determined. Of this we have the clearest account and the strongest assurance in the New Testament. God grant we may so improve this discovery, as that we may stand with honour and comfort in the judgment and find the mercy of the Lord Jesus to eternal life on that awful day.

J. ORTON.

Application of the 3d Chap. of James.

Let this pathetick discourse of the apostle, coacerning the difficulty and importance of governing our tongues aright, engage us to the strictest care on this great article of practical religion, of which so many are careless, in which the most are so far deficient, as to entitle those to the character of perfect men, who do not here offend. Let us intreat the assistance of divine grace, that we may *keep your mouths as with a bridle*; that we may *steer this important helm aright*, lest by the mismanagement of it, we *shipwreck even our eternal hopes*. Let us be cautious of every spark, where there are so many combustible materials; and take heed, lest we, and others, be defiled and infernal flames be kindled and propagated. It is indeed a difficult, but in consequence of this, a glorious toil, far more glorious than to subdue the fiercest animals, or the haughtiest enemies. Let us, therefore, resolutely make the attempt, and learn to employ our tongues, as indeed the glory of our frame, to bless God, even the Father.

And let the remembrance of that similitude of God, in which men are formed, make us tender of all their interests ; but especially careful, that we do not injure them by unkind reproaches, or detracting speeches ; and so much the rather, that we may maintain a consistency between the words of *devotion* addressed to God, and those of *converse* with our fellow creatures. So shall the well spring of wisdom, rising up in our hearts and streaming forth from our lips, be as a flowing brook. Let those, who are by providence called to be teachers of others, set a double guard upon their words, not only in publick, but in private too, as peculiar notice will be taken of them ; and the honour of religion, one way or another, be greatly affected by the tenour of their discourses. And let the awful account, which such are to give, the greater judgment they are to expect, prevent any from intruding themselves into such an office, without suitable qualifications and a regular call. May God enable them to judge rightly respecting that call ; and where it is indeed given, may his grace furnish them for their work and his mercy cover those many imperfections, which the best will see room to acknowledge and lament.

P. DODDRIDGE.

Valiant for the Truth.

'Then they went on, and just at the place where Little-faith formerly was robbed, there stood a man with his sword drawn, and his face all bloody. Then said Mr. Greatheart, What art thou ? The man made answer, saying, I am one, whose name is Valiant-for-the-truth. I am a pilgrim, and am going to the celestial city. Now, as I was on my way, there were three men, who did beset me and propounded unto me these three things : 1. Whether I would become one of them : 2. or go back from whence I came : 3. or die upon the place. To the first I answered, I had been a true man a long season, and therefore it could not be expected that I should now cast in my lot with thieves. Then they demanded what I would say to the second. So I told them, that had I not found inconvenience in the place from whence I came, I had not forsaken it at all ; but finding it altogether unsuit-

able for me, I forsook it for this way.—Then they asked me what I said to the third. And I told them, my life cost me far too dear than lightly to give it away. Besides, you have nothing to do thus to put things to my choice ; wherefore, at your peril be it, if you meddle. Then these three, to wit, Wildhead, Inconsiderate, and Pragmatic, drew upon me, and I also drew upon them. So we fell to it, one against three, for the space of three hours. They have left upon me, as you see, some of the marks of their valour, and have also carried away with them some of mine. They are but just now gone : I suppose they might, as the saying is, hear your horse dash, and so they betook themselves to flight.

GREATHEART. But here was great odds, three against one.

VALIANT. It is true. But little or more are nothing to him, who has the truth on his side. Though an host should encamp against me, said one, my heart shall not fear ; though war should rise up against me, in this will I be confident. Besides, said he, I have read in some records, that one man has fought an army ; and how many did Simpson slay with the jaw bone of an ass ?—Then said the guide, why did you not cry out, that some might have come to your succour ? **VALIANT.** So I did to my King, [who I knew could hear me and afford invisible help, and that was enough for me.—J. BUNYAN.

Christian Wisdom.

Our wisdom is to be still and quiet and to mind our own business. For my own part; my afflictions say to me, *Study to show thyself approved unto God.* What empty things are the applauses of creatures, and how idle the pursuit of them ! I seem near the end of my course and hope, through grace and grace only, to finish it with joy. I have no transports, but a steady hope of eternal life, on the ground of my Saviour's death. I feel some freedom in my applications to God in his name. If I should die, I shall be able to say to the rising generation, *God will surely visit you.* A work is begun, that will not end, till the world is subdued to the Saviour.

A. FULLER.

Extract from a Dialogue between Truth and Peace.

Truth. In what dark corner of the world, sweet Peace, have we two met? How hath this present evil world banished me from all the coasts and quarters of it; and how hath the righteous God, in judgment, taken thee from the earth?

Peace. 'Tis lamentably true, blessed Truth; the foundations of the world have been long out of course; the gates of earth and hell have conspired together to intercept our joyful meeting.—With what a wearied, tired wing have I flown over nations, kingdoms, cities, towns, to find out precious truth?

Truth. The like inquiries in my flights and travails have I made for Peace; and still am told she hath left the earth, and fled to heaven.

Peace. Dear Truth, what is the earth but a dungeon of darkness, where truth is not?

Truth. And what's the Peace thereof, but a fleeting dream; thine ape and counterfeit?

Peace. O where's the promise of the God of heaven, that *righteousness* and *peace* shall kiss each other?

Truth. Patience, sweet Peace, these heavens and earth are growing old and shill be changed like a garment. They shall melt away and be burnt up with all the works that are therein; and the most High, Eternal Creator, shall create *new heavens* and *new earth*, wherein dwells *righteousness*. Our kisses then shall have their endless date of pure and sweetest joys! Till then both thou and I must hope, and wait, and bear the fury of the dragon's wrath, whose monstrous lies and furies shall, with himself, be cast into the lake of fire, the second death.

ROGER WILLIAMS.

The prospect of War, in Europe....1823.

SEE JEREMIAH iv. 19—31. REVELVTON xi. 15—19, AND
xvi. 12—21:

The trump of woe, the blast has blown ;
Woe to the earth, the angels cry :
Let antichrist be overthrown ;
Let antichristian nations die.

Jehovah speaks—let every ear
Regard his awful, sovereign word—
“ My patience can no more forbear ;
I draw the vengeful, bloody sword.

When ye besought my holy name,
I gave you respite through my grace ;
Now I the final war proclaim,
For ye have dar'd me to my face.

The Jews, the children of my friend,
Ye have not succour'd in their woe ;
Nor Afric's sons would ye defend,
Though sunk in grief and shame so low.

Yet ye havd help'd the mystic whore ;
Against my truth, ye've boldly fought :
Your pride and lies I'll bear no more ;
Your thrones and realms I'll bring to nought.

The blood of souls your blood demands,
My faithful word confirms the call :
As sure as my own kingdom stands,
Shall antichristian nations fall.

Ye faithful souls, my chiefest care,
As o'er the earth I cast mine eye ;
Of every sin and lie beware,
While antichristian nations die.

Let truth and love your strength maintain,
The war shall end in holy peace ;

My saints the vict'ry shall obtain,
And all their foes and troubles cease."

Blest saints, the Saviour's counsel hear ;
His voice is love, as well as wrath ;
With patience every burden bear ;
The meek shall soon possess the earth.

Providence, February, 1823.

Address to the New-England Churches.

The Savior God, whose throne is high,
* Beholds your sinful ways ;
His sword is fixed upon his thigh,
Yet still he offers peace.

" Two hundred years, my name ye've known,
And richly shar'd my grace ;
Yet now your sins provoke my frown,
Your lies my soul displease.

Turn, then, at my rebuke return,
While yet my vengeance stays ;
Repent in truth, your folly mourn ;
Then peaceful be your days.

My truth ye've known and long profess'd ;
But yet ye've faithless been ;
My richest blessings ye've possess'd ;
Yet turn'd my grace to sin.

My last demand, ye churches, hear
Your sins and lies forsake ;
Or, soon in judgment, I declare,
Your lovely crown I'll break.

My cries, my tears, my blood you scorn ;
And can my mercy wait ?
Turn then to me, ye churches, turn—
Or know your dreadful fate.

My faithful teachers, never faint ;
 I know your heavy sighs ;
 I'll hear and answer your complaint ;
 I'll help, though nature dies.

My faithful children, watch and pray ;
 Your watchful pastors hear ;
 The proud shall know the woeful day,
 Which they declare is near.

My name, my word, my day revere ;
 The rights of man regard :
 Trust in my grace with holy fear,
 While sinners I reward."

Providence, Feb. 1822.

ANECDOTES.

HERVEY.

For some years before Mr. Hervey's death, he visited very few of the principal persons in his neighbourhood. Being once asked, "Why he so seldom went to see the neighbouring gentlemen, who yet shewed him all possible esteem and respect?" He answered, "I can hardly name a polite family, where the conversation ever turns upon the things of God. I hear much frothy and worldly chit chat; but not a word of Christ. And I am determined not to visit those companies where there is not room for my master as well as myself."

ZENO.

Zeno, being present where a person of a loquacious disposition played himself off, said, with an air of concern in his countenance, "I perceive that poor gentleman is ill. He has a violent flux upon him." The company was alarmed, and the speaker stopped in his career. "Yes," added the philosopher, "the flux is so violent that it has carried his ears into his tongue."

BERRIDGE.

The Rev. Mr. Berridge being once visited by a very loquacious young lady, who, forgetting the modesty of her sex, and the superior gravity of an aged divine, engrossed all the conversation of the

interview with small talk concerning herself. When she rose to retire, he said, " Madam, before you withdraw, I have one piece of advice to give you; and that is, when you go into company again, after you have talked half an hour without intermission, I recommend it to you to stop awhile, and see if any other of the company has any thing to say."

A GAY PERSON.

A godly minister of the gospel occasionally visiting a gay person, was introduced to a room near to that wherein she dressed. After waiting some hours, the lady came in, and found him in tears.—She inquired the reason of his weeping. He replied, " Madam, I weep on reflecting that you can spend so many hours before your glass, and in adorning your person, while I spend so few hours before my God, and in adorning my soul." The rebuke struck her conscience. She lived and died a monument of grace.

PHILIP.

Philip, King of Macedon, as he was wrestling at the Olympic games, fell down in the sand; and when he rose again, seeing the print of his body in the sand, cried out, "*O how little a parcel of earth will hold us when we are dead, who are ambitiously seeking after the whole world whilst we are living.*"

" Where are the mighty thunderbolts of war,
The Roman Caesars and the Grecian Chiefs,
The boast of story? Where the hot brain'd youth
Who the tiara at his pleasure tore
From kings of all the then discover'd globe;
And cry'd, forsooth, because his arm was hamper'd,
And had not room enough to do its work?
Alas! how slim, dishonourably slim,
And cramm'd into a space we blush to name." BLAIR.



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